



—Star Photographer Paul Schmick

Historic Tregaron is being offered for sale to the Russians as a chancery site.

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Tregaron, Davies Estate, Offered as Soviet Chancery

By ROBERTA HORNIG

Star Staff Writer

Tregaron, the lavish Northwest Washington estate of the late Joseph E. Davies, today was formally offered for sale to the State Department for use as a new Soviet embassy and chancery.

The offer was made through a letter from attorney Edmund D. Campbell, representing the estate owners, to Protocol Chief James W. Symington.

Campbell wrote that Russian Embassy officials have advised him they would like to locate at Tregaron.

The 20½ acre estate at 3029 Klinge Road, west of Connecticut Avenue, would cost \$3.5 million.

Campbell said he is aware that the United States has offered the Russians the old Mount Alto Veterans Hospital on Wisconsin Avenue, but said Tregaron is a much better offer.

Values Compared

"In view of the fact that the Mount Alto property has an admitted value of not less than \$8 million, while Tregaron can be obtained for less than half this sum, and that the Russian government would apparently prefer Tregaron as a chancery site, our proposal to you would appear to be in the best interests of the United States," he wrote.

The offer carried with it a proposal that if the department does not care to buy Tregaron, its owners would be willing to exchange it for a \$3.5 million portion of the Mount Alto property.

"This would permit a substantial financial saving to the United States," Campbell wrote.

A copy of the offer also was sent to Lawson Knott, head of the General Services Administration.

Sees Distinct Advantage

Campbell said the Russians have shown interest in the estate of the late American ambassador to Russia for "well over a year."

He said the way it is being offered has distinct advantages. If the government buys the property it avoids any zoning regulations. If the property is exchanged, it would require no congressional appropriation.

Campbell described the estate as a "natural for a chancery." On Klinge Road and Macomb Street, it is bounded on nearly three sides by parkland. On the other side is the Chinese Embassy.

Beside the huge main house, which was used as a set for the film "Advise and Consent," the property includes three smaller buildings and a Russian "dacha" which Davies once used as an

office. The "dacha," adjoining the main house, is a copy of a Russian country house.

Tregaron was used recently as the offices of Comsat Corp. It now is being used for a small Montessori school.

Vast Azalea Displays

The estate was known in years past for its vast displays of azaleas. Every spring Ambassador Davies opened it to the public for an admission fee which went to charity. It also once included a nine-hole golf course.

Davies was a favorite of the Russians during his ambassadorship to Russia between 1936 and 1938, and his experiences were recounted in his book "Mission to Moscow." He returned to Russia in 1942 as a special emissary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

During his stay, he collected Russian historic and artistic works. The collection was considered the finest of its kind outside the Soviet Union.

The estate now is owned by Davies' three daughters, Mrs. E. Fontaine Broun and Mrs. Lowell B. Ditzen of Washington and Mrs. Robert L. Grosjean of Bedford, N.Y.

The Russians for years have been trying to move out of their overcrowded quarters on 16th Street NW between L and M Streets. Up to now they have been thwarted in all their attempts.

The embassy was believed to have been very interested in locating at Mount Alto. That move has been held up while the